

## ***Section 1 – Democrazia e democratizzazioni***

### **Panel 2. Autocracy Strikes Back: Autocratization, Authoritarian Resilience and Transformation in the Post-Cold War.**

**Chair: Andrea Cassani**

In 1991, a *Journal of Democracy* collection announced “The global resurgence of democracy”. Twenty-five years later, the editors of that journal ask “Is democracy in decline?” and warn that “Authoritarianism goes global”. Admittedly, this is a simplistic way to summarize two decades of research on comparative political regimes. However, these titles seize the radical change that has recently occurred in analysts’ perceptions about the present and future of democracy and authoritarianism in the world.

This panel aims to collect papers that help us go beyond these admittedly thought-provoking titles and draw a more nuanced and detailed picture of contemporary regime trajectories. Papers are welcomed that examine one or more of the following trends, in particular:

- 1) Autocratization, or democratic backsliding, that is, outright transitions from democracy to closed autocracy, but also cases of loss of democratic quality and changes towards increasing levels of authoritarianism that do not necessarily lead to the abrogation of electoral rule;
- 2) Authoritarian resilience, that is, all the strategies that contemporary autocrats design to (try to) consolidate the regime, or re-consolidate the regime following a failed democratic transition, including their legitimation strategies, the promotion of economic growth and social welfare, the processes of learning and cooperation among non-democratic countries;
- 3) relatedly, Authoritarian transformation, that is, all the recent institutional reforms and developments that contemporary autocracies are going through, whose common denominator is not being meant to introduce democracy.

We are particularly interested in empirical contributions that focus on the post-Cold War period, and are open to a broad range of methods, approaches, and case selection.